

IN GENERAL ABOUT
THE CLOSE OF THE AGE,
THE ANTICHRIST
AND THE 2ND COMING OF CHRIST



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In General, About the Close of the Age, The Antichrist and the 2nd Coming of Christ

The Revelation of the Evangelist Saint John the Theologian is the last godly-inspired book of the New Testament. It was written on Patmos in 95 A.D. and comprises 22 chapters, which refer to prophecies that are mainly ecclesiastical, political, and about wars. What people could not even think about one hundred years ago, [e.g., the possibility of nuclear wars] the Book of Revelations foretold nearly 1,900 years ago.

The aim of the book of Revelation is the spiritual strengthening of the believers in the persecutions and the avoidance of the deception of the various false prophets, especially during the age of the Antichrist, when the state of the Church will be critical and chaotic, with natural upheavals in the earth, the sea and the sky. All these things will help the unsealed evil people to repent and - from among the believers - the good to become better. Sin has such power that it not only pollutes the people who committed it but also the natural world—the trees, the waters, the sea, the air... etc.

The cause of evil, for the Antichrist's power to be imposed, will be "our own transgressions and illnesses," as Saint Gregory the Theologian says. The more we approach the end times of unrepentant humanity, the more abundant light is cast on many difficult-to-interpret points, and dramatic and worldwide events will triumphantly proclaim the truths of the Holy Scripture regarding the end of the world.

It is time for all faithful Christians to study the godly-inspired book of the Revelation of Evangelist John the Theologian to avoid the dreadful traps the Antichrist instruments craftily set up.

The Holy Spirit Himself urges us to do this through the godly-wise Evangelist, John, not only to hear and read but also to keep the godly inspired words it teaches us telling us. **"Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy and keep what is written in them. For the time is near" (Rev. 1:3).**

The word of God is always helpful to us, especially during these last wicked times, when, because of our many and great sins, the all-seeing God will allow the just punishment of unrepentant humanity with a multitude of great afflictions.

The signs of the times shout to us that we are living in apocalyptic times, and the things that the Holy Spirit has prophesied about our days are being fulfilled. Our general apostasy bears witness to the worldly and satanic train of thought—contrary to God's will—which imbues us.

For our related notification, we will subsequently mention only a few passages of the New Testament dealing with the end of the world, the Antichrist, and the Second Coming of our Christ.



In the Gospel, according to Matthew, we read: **"Now if one of you says, behold Christ is here do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets shall arise and will give great signs and wonders, so as to deceive, if possible, even the chosen. Behold I have foretold you."**

In other words, Christ is telling us when the Antichrist comes, there will be many false christs and false prophets who will deceive people - even the righteous ones, if they are not careful - with demonic phantasies. Therefore, we have no excuse since He has forewarned us of this.

In Matthew 16:27, we read, **"The Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father, and then He will pay back to each one according to his deed."**

In Mark 13:32, we read: "**Concerning that day or that hour no one knows, not even the Angels in heaven, nor the Son, except the Father. Take heed, be vigilant and pray. For you do not know when the time is...**"

These things the Lord commands to all of us. We ought not only to be vigilant but also to pray. For our own benefit, the Lord hid both the time of our end and the end of the world so that we are always ready.

In Luke 21: 25-28, the following is written: "**And there will be signs in the sun and the sky and the stars, and upon the earth the distress among the nations with perplexity, the seas and waves roaring. Men's hearts will fail them for fear, and the expectation of what is to come upon the universe; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming on a cloud with great power and glory. When these things begin to happen look up and raise up your heads, because your deliverance is approaching..."**

Here, the Lord prophesies that the heavenly powers will be shaken. Then everyone, both believers and non-believers, will see the Son of Man, i.e. our Lord Jesus Christ, coming as God in the clouds, with great power and glory, with the Precious Cross preceding, which will shine more brilliantly than the sun, and Everyone will know him.

For this reason, our Lord tells us. When these things happen, lift your heads, you who are heavily laden with corruption, because your deliverance, i.e., complete freedom of soul and body, has arrived.

In the same chapter, vss 34-36, of the Gospel Luke, the following awakening things are written, "**But take heed to yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a snare; for it will come upon all who dwell upon the face of the whole earth. But watch at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."**

Here, our Lord urges us to live a life of prayer and watchfulness as an antidote to the hardships that will find sinners. Because whoever is careful in doing good work and doesn't find rest in worldly things, to them, that day will not be like a trap, but like a day of celebration. For this reason, we must keep vigil and pray to God to avoid all the evils that will come to us and that we may be granted eternal goods.

In the 2nd Epistle to the Thessalonians, the Apostle Paul writes the following words worthy of attention: "**Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you this? And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, and the Lord Jesus will slay him with the breath of His mouth and destroy him by His appearing and His coming. The coming of the lawless one by the activity of Satan will**

be with all power and with pretended signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are to perish, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends upon them a strong delusion, to make them believe what is false, so that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

Brief explanation. Let no one, the Apostle Paul tells us, deceive you in a certain way because the Coming of the Lord will not happen if the apostasy doesn't occur first, i.e., the Antichrist, who will lead many to apostasy, even the elect. He named the Antichrist a man of sin and a son of perdition because not only will he do every sin and will be lost, but he will also bring down into sin the others to send them to perdition.

The Antichrist will strive to eradicate every image, even of God also, and only himself will he preach as God. He will sit in the distinct Temple of God in Jerusalem and every Temple of God. He will strive to prove himself as God. 'Don't you (St. Paul is saying) recall that I was telling you these things when we were together?* The Antichrist will reveal himself in his own time. He left unknown the time in which he would come. However, in a hidden way and with unclarity, he spoke of Nero, who is not much lower in evil than the Antichrist. When the kingdom is dissolved, the Antichrist will attempt to grab the authority of men and God. The Lord will annihilate the Antichrist with His breath, with merely His command. He will make him completely useless because merely with His appearance, Christ will put an end to the Antichrist's deception and delusion. The Antichrist will be a person who will have Satan acting in him and through him. He will do signs and false wonders and deceive those who pay attention to him. He will seem dreadful from every side - from authority, beastliness, and inhumanity will make all his work to deceive and treat people unjustly, « preventing and harming their salvation. However, the Antichrist does not have power over the believers and the elect but over the unbelievers and those who are lost.

The presence of this iniquitous person will happen according to Satan's energy, with every power and with signs and strange, false and deceptive occurrences, and with every type of unjust deception between those who are destined for perdition because they refused to accept the love for truth to be saved. For this reason, God will allow the devil's energy to come upon them, deceiving them into believing the falsehood so that all those who did not believe the truth will be condemned, having given their preference to injustice.

* * *

In the 1st Epistle of the Apostle Peter, we read:

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God that in due time he may exalt you. Cast all your anxieties on him, for he cares about you. Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith." (5:6-9)

Here, the Apostle Peter urges us to humble ourselves beneath God's strong hand so that he can lift us up at the appropriate time. He urges us not to be concerned about earthly things but to throw the care of our lives onto God, Who is our provider.

Because the devil usually dominates those who are not careful but who live with negligence, the Apostle urges us to pay attention to our intellect and to have a vigilant spirit in the virtues and commandments of the Lord because our enemy, the devil, walks like an angry and wild lion and seeks whom to find careless in wicked thoughts to tear him down into the act of sin and thus he swallows him — throwing him into despair. For this reason, St. Peter urges us not to cower but to resist with firmness and unhesitating faith in God because by doing this, we will make all the devil's fiery darts useless. And let us not forget the Lord's saying: **"for apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)**, as well as Isaiah's saying earlier, **"There is no one saving except for me" (43:11).**

In the 2nd epistle of the Apostle Peter, we read the following dreadful things: **"But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be kindled and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire! But according to His promise we wait for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you wait for these, be zealous to be found by Him without spot or blemish, and at peace And count the forbearance of our Lord as salvation...." (3:10-15)**

Here, the Apostle Peter reveals the unknown and unhoped for coming of the Lord and that we ought to always be vigilant and prepared with repentance to await the Lord. Because then - during the second coming of Christ, with a dreadful sound - the heavens will be altered and will receive the renewal for the better. This alteration is for the better of heaven; Isaiah also prophesies as follows: **"All the host of heaven shall rot away, and the skies roll up like a scroll. All their host shall fall, as leaves fall from the vine, like leaves falling from the fig tree." (34:4)** About the alteration of the sky and the stars the Lord foretold the following: **"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken..." (Matt. 24:29).**

In other words, Saint Nikodemos the Hagiorite tells us that the whole material world will become a stove fired up well and a furnace from earth to the sky in which the skies, the elements, the plants, the irrational animals, and sinful people will be burned up. Through this burning, all

the material elements will be renewed. Although the sins of sinners will be burned up, they will be eternally punished.

First, the renewal of people will occur through the resurrection, and then the whole creation will be renewed.

Because dreadful and fearsome things will occur, what life should we lead? Of course, a holy, pious, god-loving and virtuous life. And because we await the dreadful coming of the Lord, we should reach that great day of the recompense of the works uncondemned.

Because insufferable punishments await the impious and inexpressible goods for the pious, let us show eagerness so that we are not polluted with sins but be preserved pure with the general continence of all the senses.



I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, and the stars in the sky fell to earth (6:12-13).

* * *

Prior to the 2nd Coming of Christ to the world, according to the Holy Scripture and the Fathers of the Orthodox Church, the Antichrist will precede — a most impious man activated by Satan. Saint Cyril of Jerusalem informs us that the Antichrist "**is coming... when the close of the world is approaching**" and that he will reveal all his murderous disposition against the Church and "**against all (people) especially against us Christians.**"

According to Saint John Chrysostom, the Antichrist will be a person accepting all the energy of Satan. "What will he not work then? He will move all, he will disturb all...., for he will work a million things and prepare others to work hardships" (P.G. 62,482). "When the Antichrist becomes prevailing," says the sacred Chrysostom, "he will persecute the Church of God and reveal his wickedness..."

Among many other things, Saint Cyril of Jerusalem makes known to us the following also about the Antichrist: Daring such things for only 3 & 1/2 years, he will then be abolished by the second glorious coming from the heavens of the only begotten Son of God, of our faithful Lord and Savior Christ Who, defeating the Antichrist with the breath of His mouth, will hand him over to the fire of Gehenna" (Catech. 15, Chapter 12).

According to Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, hate amongst brothers will give ground to the Antichrist because the Devil prepares the schisms of peoples so that he who is coming can become acceptable. St. Cyril places above all martyrs those who, at the time of the Antichrist - will witness with piety for the name of Christ because the former struggled only with people. In contrast, the martyrs of the Antichrist's time will fight with Satan himself in person.

The temptation to define the time of the events of the revelations is limited by the terms of Saint Irenaeus, who says: "It is safer and less dangerous, to await the outcome of the prophecy, rather than to ponder and guess at the name" (Contra Hares. 30:3), and elsewhere he tells us: "Every prophecy before being fulfilled is an enigma and something irrational to people. When the time comes, and that which has been prophesied is realized, it achieves the most precise explanation." Meanwhile, Saint Andrew of Caesarea says, "Time and experience will reveal to those who are vigilant."

The Antichrist will precede the 2nd Coming of Christ. He will preach worldwide persecution against the faithful. For this reason, great attention and spiritual wakefulness are demanded so that we will not be deceived in any way, as the Apostle Paul proclaims to the Thessalonians. The Antichrist will be a natural person who will place himself against the God-man Christ, His teaching and His Orthodox Church. Antichrist means he who is coming instead of Christ and is opposed to Christ. According to the Apostle Paul, he is essentially the opponent of Christ and His world-saving work.

The Evangelist John tells us (1 John 2:22), "This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son." Saint John Damascene assures us that "he who does not confess the Son of God having come in the flesh and that he is perfect God and has become a perfect man, after being God, is antichrist" (P.G. 94, 1216). Whoever, that is, rejects the incarnation of Christ is antichrist.

Whoever again are enemies of Christ's Faith, opponents of the Gospel of the Lord, are antichrists. There existed many forerunners of the Antichrist in the past, but also very many who are working today in his plans, as are the heresies, sorceries, Zionism and many international political and financial organizations.

Additional signs of the last days will be the appearance of many false prophets, the increase of destructive wars, hunger, dreadful and mortal illnesses, earthquakes in places, and the scandals of lay people and clergymen. Saint Cyril of Jerusalem writes in relation: "Bishops against bishops and clergymen against clergymen and peoples against peoples unto blood." The Holy Father urges us not to pay attention to those things that are happening but to those that have been written, nor should the perchance evil conduct of the clergy be a cause for our own perdition.



I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained (6:9).

Another eschatological sin is the lessening of love and the increase of hating brothers before the coming of the Antichrist: "And because wickedness is multiplied, most men's love will grow cold," as the Evangelist Matthew mentions in chapter 24, verse 12.

Another sign is the preaching of the Gospel to all the world, independently of whether the people believe or not: "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come." (Mat. 24:14).

The planned superinflation will aid in subjecting all the nations to the electronic money system. All exchanges and buying/selling will occur through the electronic means of exchanging values. They will be conducted with the "mark": "Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. This calls for wisdom: let him who has understanding reckon the number of the beast, for it is a human number, its number is six hundred and sixty-six." (Revelation 13:16-18).

The Antichrist's coming is being prepared by his forerunners, who, with impious and sinful works, will lead humanity to great apostasy, uselessness, and idolatry in order to accept the Antichrist. They will pursue the joining of the currents of politics, economy, and religion with the aim of creating a worldwide state with a worldwide Governor-Dictator and a pan-religion with the Antichrist as God.

The heresies, many satanic organizations, as well as the atheistic material systems, are forerunners of the Antichrist, which cause confusion and disbelief in Christ's Church and lead unsupported people to perdition. With all these things, they strive to wound Orthodoxy to work unbattered for Satan and his ungodly instruments. The most effective manner of facing the forerunners of the Antichrist, and of the Antichrist himself, is to know Christ and place Him correctly inside us with such intensity that we will love Him first and above all so that, henceforth, it is not possible for anything to separate us from Him.

The par excellence Antichrist will be him whom God will allow to appear to the world a little prior to the 2nd Coming of Christ, "he who is coming during the close of the world," according to St. John Damascene, "to fight the Church of Christ and the faithful disciples of Christ." He will perform in a word whatever Satan dictates to him as if Satan is acting in person through him. He will be the person through whom Satan will act.

God will allow the Antichrist to come for the unbelieving, the Jews and the believers. According to Saint John Chrysostom, he will not be powerful over the believers but over all those who follow the road of perdition and unrepentant believers.

Saint Ephraim the Syrian tells us that "by the allowance of Holy God, he (the Antichrist) will receive authority to deceive the world; because the impiety of the world has multiplied and everywhere he works hardships."

Let us forbear, beloved, the satanic violence with bravery in our wicked days to avoid the Antichrist's deception.

Saint Cyril of Jerusalem stresses to us: "So man, guard please your own self. You now have all the signs to know beforehand of the Antichrist. And do not just think about it, but tell them and inform the others, as many more as possible."

"While the Son of God", according to Athanasios the Great, "coming will destroy him" (BEPES 35, 150).

So, while we don't know the precise year of the coming of the Antichrist, we know from the Holy Scriptures and the God-bearing fathers quite a few things about his dark person and his actions.

In our wicked generation, many international organizations work for the more general plan of people being governed by the Antichrist. The dark powers are pursuing the complete giving over of people to the demon. So let us be wakeful because faith is a delicate thing, and we should not deny it either with words or actions so that we do not lose the Grace of Holy Baptism.

We are called to pay attention because whoever accepts the mark denies holy Baptism, the faith of Christ, and he can no longer repent. For this reason, a careful Christian life is demanded, and great attention is needed so that we never accept the deceiver Antichrist as true. It is necessary that we be in a state of repentance and spiritual readiness. And we must not forget such sacred words of our Lord as: "Now the Kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and men of violence take it by force." (Mat. 11:12) and "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming." (Mat. 5:13). The Lord will come again suddenly to judge the world as we also say in the Symbol of Faith: "And He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead, Whose kingdom shall have no end...."

The Lord will come as the flood of Noah, that is, suddenly: "As were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. (Mat. 24:37) Like the thief: "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night" (2 Peter 3:10). Like lightning! "For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man." (Mat. 24:27) That is, it will feel like lightning and be seen all over the earth by all people.

The Lord will come again on earth in the same manner that He left. The angels Who were present with the disciples of the Lord in His Ascension assured this: "This Jesus, Who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11). Till then, let us cultivate inside us this sweet expectation ~ with worthy works of repentance and virtue, love and holiness.

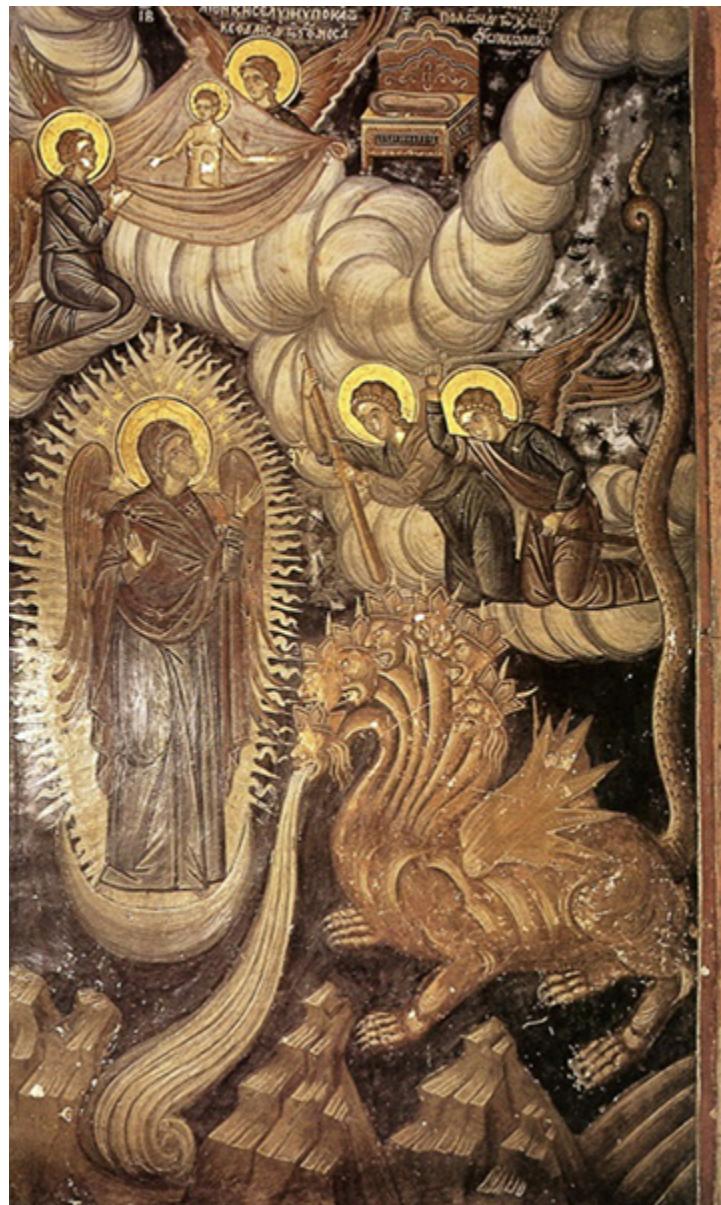
In chapter 24, verse 30 of the Evangelist Matthew, we read: "Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man (the precious Cross) in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

In the first chapter of Revelation, verse 7 is written. "Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, everyone who pierced Him; and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of Him."

Christ will not leave His faithful people so long as we walk the path of the Saints of our Church: To live with the fear of God, with humility, with prayer, with charity, with repentance, with patience, with love. Let us walk the path of truth, of light, of grace, of sanctification,

studying the Holy Scripture, patristic works, the lives of our Saints, partaking worthily in the sacramental life of our Church; and the philanthropic and soul-saving Lord will not leave us helpless. Our Lord assured us of this with the following consoling words of His: "And lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." (Mat. 28:20).

We are called to entrust ourselves entirely to God, strive to serve the truth, do what pleases God, and never forget God's judgment or recompense. Then, and only then, the peace of God and His divine protection will always accompany us and guard us.



A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head (12:1).

Saint Ephraim the Syrian, 306-373
Concerning the Antichrist

- "... If someone shows a little indifference, he is easily sieged and imprisoned by the miracles of the wicked and sly Dragon. Such a person will appear unforgivable in the judgment. Because with his own eyes, he believed willfully in the tyrant..."
- "... Be careful, brethren, of the haughtiness of the beast and the wicked crafts because he begins from the belly. So that when someone ends up in difficulty deprived of food, he will be forced to accept the mark of him. So that a person does not have difficulty in accepting the mark, the wretched one does not carve it on all parts of the body but on the right hand of man so that a person will not have the power to form the symbol of Christ [i.e., the Cross]. Similarly, on the forehead, he also carved the impious mark (Rev. 13:26). If someone does not accept his mark, the fantastic wonders do not imprison him. Nor does the Lord depart from such a person, but he also illuminates his heart and draws him near Him. If we keep with sincerity the firm faith of Christ, we will quickly scatter the Enemy's power, obtain an unshakable and pious thought, and the weak Enemy will depart from us because he will not have the power to do something."
- "... Dreadful, my brethren, is the struggle in all Christ-loving people so that till the time of death they not cower, nor be negligent, when the Dragon (the Antichrist) will be carving his seal instead of the Cross of the Savior because he will use every manner so that the name of our Lord and Savior is not mentioned at his time. "His coming will become manifest to those whose minds are attached to things above. To those, however, who have their mind in earthly cares and long for earthly things, this will not become manifest."

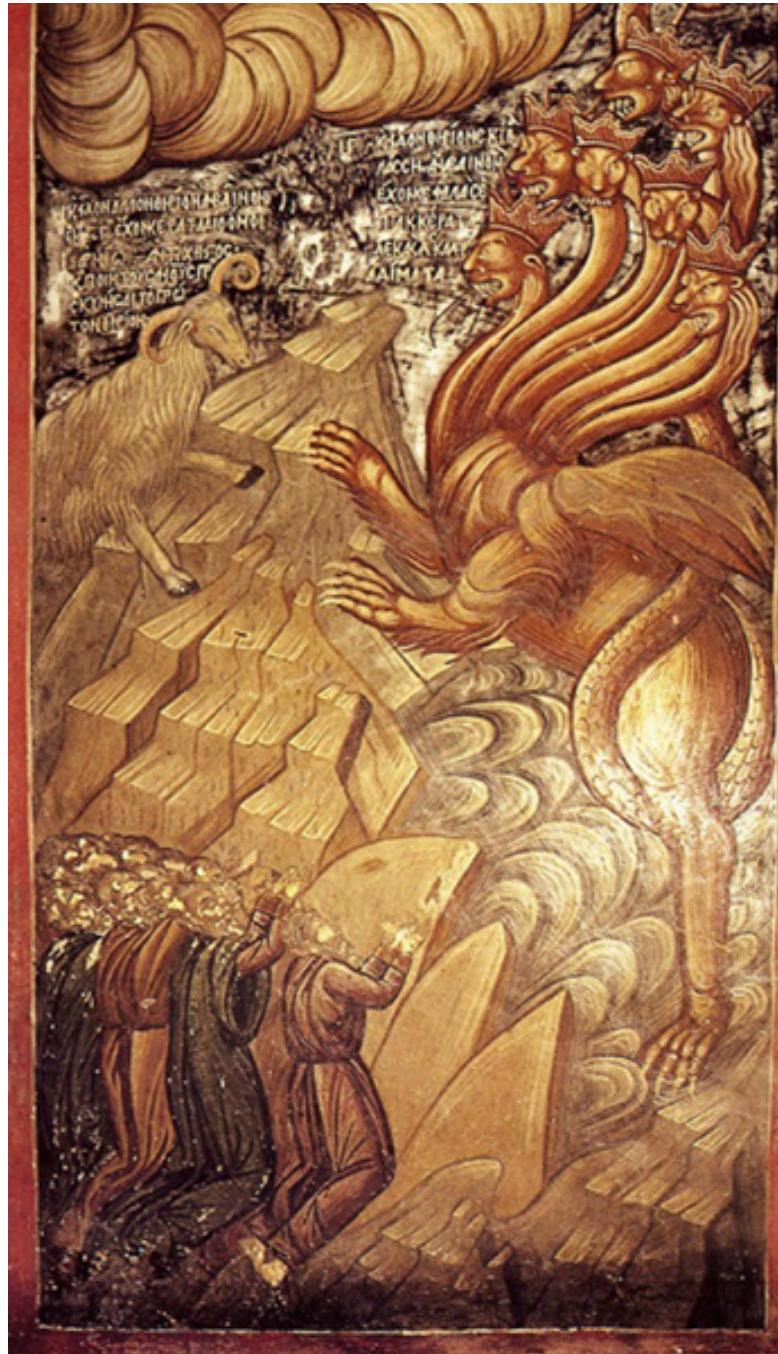
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Saint Kosmas Aitolos

- "... As at the time of Noah, people did not believe but were mocking, until suddenly the wrath of God and the flood came and it drowned all the people. Likewise, now, my Christians, at the Second Coming of our Christ, people will not believe... The words I tell you are not mine; they are words of the All-Holy Spirit ... and whoever wants, let him believe. Nevertheless, each one is free and will do as he wants. I am doing my obligation..."
- "Before the 2nd Coming, the Antichrist will be born and will do so many evils in the world, and will name himself the son of God and will stand as a king to order the whole world and to do miracles, according to fantasy, to deceive people to confess him as Christ; and whoever believes in him he will promise goods, and afterwards he will mark

them on the forehead ... and it is better that they are tyrannized and be killed rather than to believe him and be marked...

- "I believe these things, my brethren, startled you ... and I who tell them tremble and cower; but what can I do in that I have an obligation to reveal them to you? ... After these evils of the accursed Antichrist, the All-holy Cross will shine above in the sky..."



And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on its horns. Then I saw a second beast, coming out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb. And it made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast (13:1, 11-12).

Are we in the age of the Antichrist?

Beloved, all the things that we see the governments - controlled and directed by other centers - impose lead to the fact that soon everything and everyone will be placed in a worldwide super-government. There will be a worldwide electronic network in which various information and facts will be exchanged; in addition, the production of foods and currencies will be under the direct control of this global authority. With crafty and very complicated systems and machines, they will oppress the people. Unfortunately, the key to the new financial order of things will be the mark 666 on the right hand or on the forehead.

We are already in the age of the marking of the Antichrist. The forerunners, with knowledge and ignorance and servants of the Antichrist, will first strive for the loss of people's financial freedom and, subsequently, their personal freedom.

Satan, the relentless enemy of people, for centuries now is ceaselessly working, with his instruments, for the departure of people from the "in spirit and truth" worship and adoration of the Trinitarian God and, finally, to succeed in the Antichrist being readily accepted.

Here, beloved, we must underline that the dark and satanic aims of the devil are being fulfilled because we are living in sin and unrepentance. If we live without fervent faith, good disposition, and virtue, then he entraps us and gains us.

For our offensive unrepentance and disbelief, God will allow harsh chastising visitations to humanity - such as wars, illnesses, earthquakes and other things - for our repentance and return. Our great apostasy - the secular mindset with which we live and our unrepentance - will lead to our being harshly tried and undergoing years of great crises.

"Behind the secular spirit," the blessed Fr. Paisios the Hagiorite used to say, of today's 'freedom' "...is hidden the spiritual slavery, the anxiety and the anarchy which lead the world to the impasse - to the destruction of soul and body".

The people will seek prosperity from the Antichrist, contrary to the Cross. God, however, gives salvation through Christ.



Archim. Eusebius Vitas
Concerning the Antichrist and his symbol, 666
(Excerpt from his sermon)

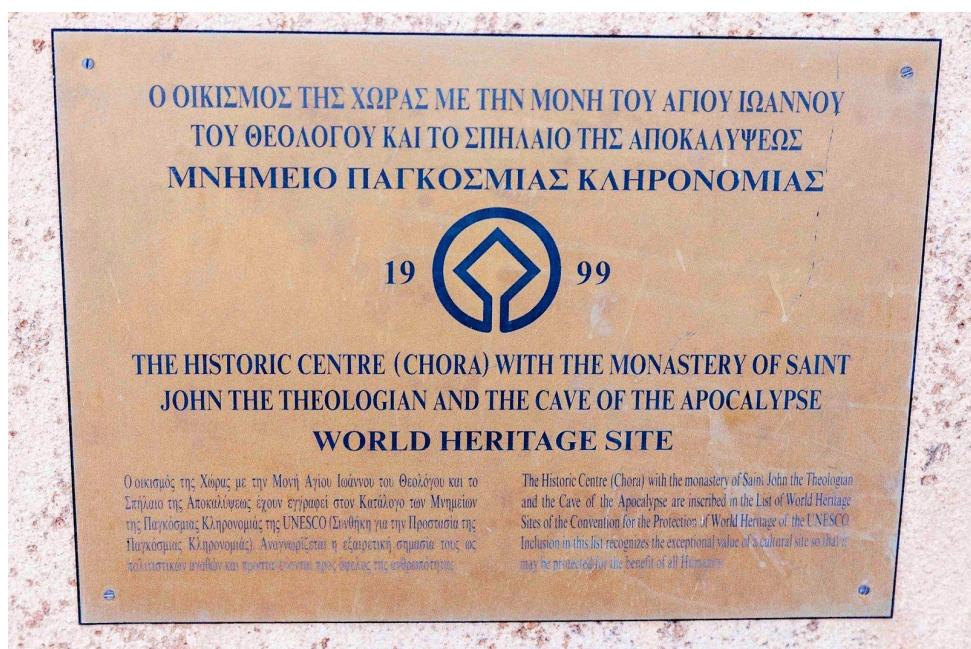
Many of our brethren, who are of a good disposition in other things, don't know anything—or know very little and are confused about the 666 and the marking. So once we ourselves are sufficiently enlightened, we ought to enlighten others as well. Fortunately, there exist today magazines, cassettes, and other related means.

We ourselves should also know, and tell others as well, that whether the name of the Antichrist is written on the marking or his number 666, it is the same thing. Revelations say it clearly: "**He who has the mark, the name of the beast or the number of his name.**" Consequently, there is no difference between the name and the number.

The mark on us with the number of the beast will have dreadful consequences for our spiritual hypostasis and life. It will make us inert - or, instead, will cause the grace and blessing of God to depart from us. It will make our Holy Baptism useless since we will go again with satan, whom we denied when we were baptized. We will lose within us the life-giving influence of the Holy Chrism, the gifts of the All-Holy Spirit, which makes our existence a whole Temple of the living God. Christ and satan cannot coexist in us. We must digest this well... (2 Cor. 6, 14-18).

... Our criterion should not be the people's names and external validity. Still, the criterion must be what our Church says and teaches — what the Tradition and the spirit of Orthodoxy indicate to us...

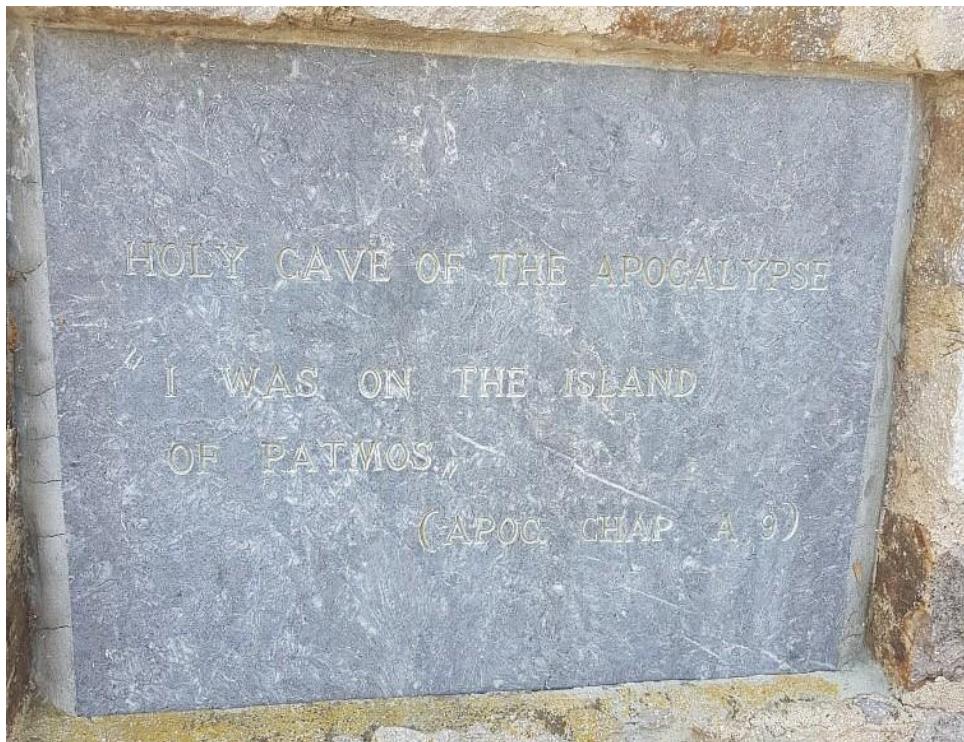
... Do not let the external characteristics of him who says something impress you. Only accept what he says if it is following the tradition of our Church, ~ if it agrees with whatever our Holy Fathers taught us, and with whatever contemporary venerable personalities teach us...



The Voice of the Church is Clear.

The more we pay attention to the people of the world, we will not listen to the voice of the Church, but even if we listen to it, we will not understand it. Consequently, we will be deluded. Nevertheless, the voice also about the matter of the 666 is clear: "**And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, 'If anyone worships the beast and its image, and receives a mark on his forehead or his hand, he also shall drink the wine of God's wrath, poured unmixed into the cup of His anger, and he shall be tormented with fire and sulphur in the presence of the holy angels and the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name.'"**" (Rev. 14:9-11).

The mark is one of the most blasphemous manifestations of the icon of Christ, which we have inside us ("As many of you as were baptized in Christ have put on Christ," don't we chant?). Is there a more disgusting and filthy curse against Christ than to allow the most haughty Antichrist to put his seal on His own photograph? And would we allow the enemy to completely slander the Lord of love as well as to say triumphantly that he smudged - even in our own case - the image of his opponent - of Christ? And is not the mark the confession of faith in the devil and his par excellence instrument, the Antichrist, with a simultaneous denial of Christ? If the Christians don't understand this, then they have suffered a complete insensitivity and have fallen from their Christian quality. These people are not Christians, even if they light up candles as tall as their height and they run to Monasteries and celebrations of Saints.



Whoever accepts the mark of the Antichrist is cut off from God.

Whoever accepts this hated number "denies Christ"; that is, he leaves Christ's group and is "attached to satan" — he goes with the devil. Him whom he rejected during his baptism, with him again he goes. We aren't saying this out of fanaticism but quoting the Scripture itself. Now, if some people want to consider whatever the Scripture says to be fanatical, let them do so. **We will listen to the Scripture and not to them.** For our salvation, Christ was sacrificed — not them. They don't give a dime for us. Christ gave Himself entirely for us. And Him we prefer and no one else. For us, whatever the Scripture says is from God. Will we place people - no matter who they are or how important and grand they are - at the same level as God? They are very deluded. Both the Scripture and the Revelation say. **"So the first angel went and poured his bowl on the earth, and foul and evil sores came upon the men who bore the mark of the beast and worshipped its image"** (Rev. 16:2).

He tells us, clearly and without beating around the bush, that whoever accepts the mark is cut off from God, becomes bound by satan, and is subjected to the same consequences which will be measured out upon those practicing impiety and this most audacious revolt against God. And it stresses that the financial benefits, which the mark will supposedly gain for them who will accept it, will cause against them the wrath of God, not only in eternity - in which they, of course, don't believe - but also in this life, whether they believe it or not. And when the wrath breaks out, and the vial is poured out upon them, neither the financial gains nor anything else will benefit them, nor will the mark (if the mark gives them anything) help them in the end.



One is the Language of Truth.

Whoever says with a light conscience that they accept the 666 without denying Christ can't see the correct thing; they don't have the delicate virtue of discernment to estimate what is God's will and what is the devil's will — what is denial and what isn't denial of Christ. And so they are ready to accept the mark with the same ease they have going to their barber or the store to shop for whatever they need.

* * *

The holy martyrs knew one language, the language of truth, which they always used. Their yes was yes, and their no was no. They did not realize the yes, which meant no and the no, which meant yes. Double talk is not a suitable plant for Christian grounds. Either you believe in Christ and confess him courageously, indifferent to the consequences, or deny him... But why do we forget the words of the Lord? "**So everyone who acknowledges Me before men, I also will acknowledge before My Father Who is in heaven; but whoever denies Me before men, I also will deny before My Father Who is in heaven**" (Mat. 10:32).



I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, "Go and measure the temple of God". And I will appoint my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days (11:1,3).

"If God is with us, who is against us?"

No matter what satan and his beast do, we Christians won't worship it. If we wish to remain indelibly written in God's book of life, as we are through Holy Baptism and Holy Chrism, let us not cower from the tyrant's threats. If we align our lives following the Lord's will, and if we constantly keep our association with the Lord, no one will be able to defeat us, even if we must go through martyrdom. This will be a unique honour for us. In the struggle Satan undertook through the ages against Christ, which he will undertake, especially with his instrument, the Antichrist, we should know that Christ will be the victor. And this, in many places and ways, the Sacred Revelations stresses us. So have courage and optimism, my beloved brethren. And "**this is the victory which overcame the world, our faith,**" says Saint John in his Epistle (1 John 5:4), so long as we remain faithful to the Lord "**as having been born of God.**"

"Do not trust in rulers, on the sons of men, in whom there is no salvation" (Psalm 145:3)

"My help is from the Lord who created the Heaven and the earth." (Psalm 120: 2)

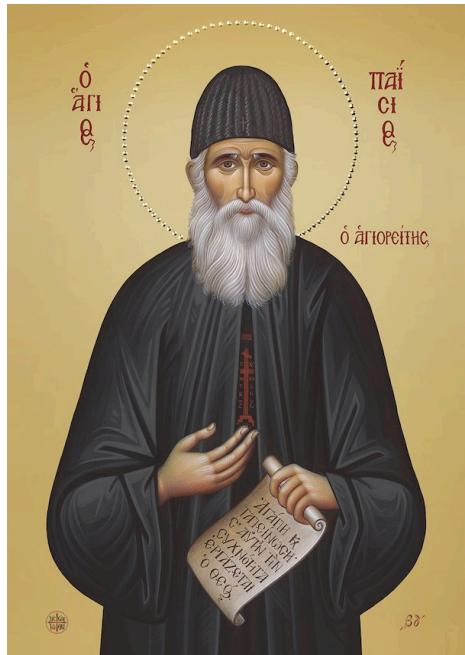


Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 (14:1).

AWAKENING AND STRENGTHENING SAYINGS

(A) of Fr. Paisios the Hagiorite

- Today, since the state goes against divine law, whoever doesn't speak should be put in jail. Today, this occupation is a confession.
- When everything is burning up around you, pain won't allow you to be silent. Prayer is prayer, and speech is speech.
- God loves Greece. We won't be lost in the present sea storm since we weren't lost in so many past storms. The people have hidden strength in times of need.
- God allows and concedes for our sins. Let us not sleep, however, and let us be ready. Silence sometimes bears great responsibility. If we don't shout, our fathers will get up from their tombs and will thrash us and curse us. They forbade so many things for the homeland and us. What are we doing for her: Orthodox Greece, with its traditions, saints, and heroes to be fought by the Greeks themselves? It is a shame.
- No matter what is voted, it cannot abolish God's law and calm the conscience.
- ... Behind the E.O.K. (European Common Market) is hidden the dictatorship of those Satanists. But God will utilize it for the good...
- ... Such a dictatorship that they are thinking of doing, only the devil could have thought up.



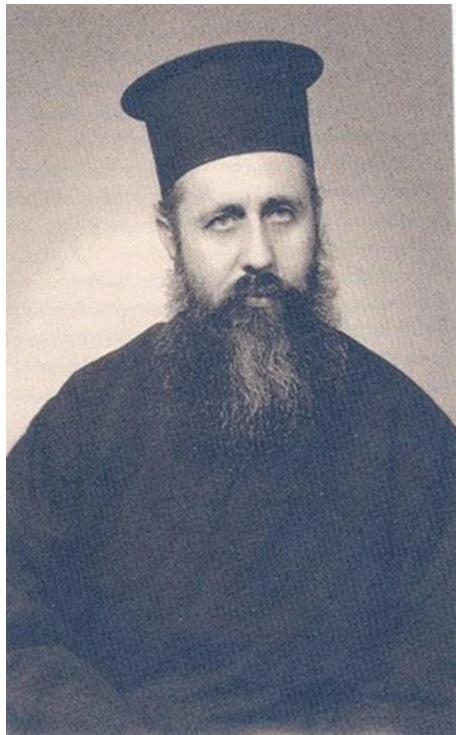
Concerning the above, the blessed Fr. Paisios, in the manuscript text, "Signs of the Times," wrote the following also in 1987: "I wonder! Don't they question what is going on? Why don't they put a question mark next to their mind's interpretations? What if they helped the Antichrist mark more people? How can they sway these people from losing their souls? 'For false christ and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect' (Mk 13:22). Those who give their own interpretations will be led astray. Things are very clear. The 'beast-with 666' in Brussels has swallowed almost all the countries in its computers. The card, the identification cards, the introduction to the mark, what do they indicate? Unfortunately, we only listen to the radio when we want to hear the weather report." The venerable Elder finishes with the following: "Therefore, placing the cross sign next to it cannot sanctify the

Antichrist (devil) symbol on our identification card, head or hand. We have the power of the Holy Cross (our holy symbol) and the divine grace of Christ only as long as we have the sacred

marking of the Holy Baptism. In other words, we have denied the devil, sided with Christ and received the Holy Marking (the seal of the Gift of the Holy Spirit). May God enlighten us. With lots of pain and love in Christ. Amen."

* * *

(B) of Fr. Epiphanios Theodoropoulos



The ever-memorable wise and virtuous Archimandrite Epiphanios Theodoropoulos wrote the following, referring to the identification cards: **"As offending our religious sensitivity with the use of a suspect and accusable number, they are absolutely unacceptable. WE WILL NOT ACCEPT THEM!"**

Christians are the most law-abiding people when the laws don't offend their religious convictions. When the contrary occurs, then **"it is better to be obedient to God rather than men"** (Acts 5:29); they enter into transgressing the law, being indifferent to the consequences. Then we will say and live the, **"Unto us it was given on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him but also to suffer for His sake"** (Phil. 1:29). Our faith has the Cross as its symbol and foundation!....

If what is spread about is accurate, and the new identification cards will bear, manifestly or unseen, either the figure of Beelzebub or the number 666 or whatever anti-Christian symbol, or even if they have only the E.K.A.M..., we will say NO and again NO and a million times NO, to these new cards, no matter what we will face... **"Let the King-Government hear these things."**

* * *

(C) of the Holy Mountain

The Sacred Community of the Holy Mountain setting out from the Pan-Haghioritic vigil in the Sacred Church of the Protaton at Karyes of the Holy Mountain on September 8, 1997, **ABOUT THE TOPIC OF THE SHEGHEN AGREEMENT**, among other things, said:

"...worries us that the evil will become generalized, much more so since the implementation in our country of the Schengen Agreement leads to the publication of electronic identification cards, which should be avoided. Under these conditions, that is, the inscription of the number of the ill-famed Antichrist on our personal identification cards, henceforth the boundaries of confession or denial of our Lord Jesus Christ begin to be prescribed.

"But even if in the beginning the inscription of the number—the emblem of the Antichrist—is omitted on the electronic identification cards, we—in accordance to the decisions of the Sacred Community—refuse to receive them as denying subjection in the electronic "filing," which oppresses personal freedom, personal privacy and the proof of innocence of the citizen, which were absolutely guaranteed in the Constitution of our country till this day.

"... we refuse to receive any type of electronic identification card with the Universal Bar Code Registration (E.K.A.M.) as offending the freedom of the person and our Christian conscience."

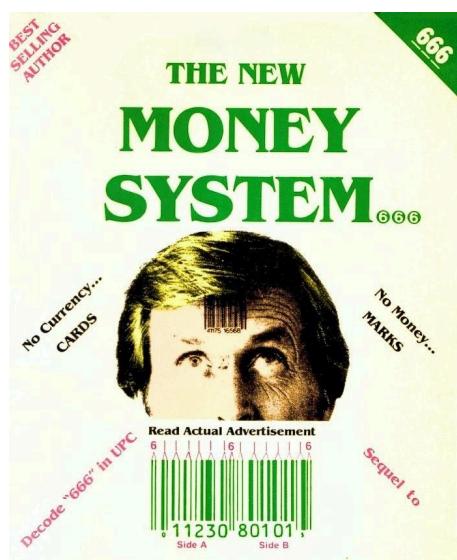
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(D) of the Metropolis of Stagon and Meteora

The Sacred Metropolis of Stagon and Meteora, referring to the Schengen Agreement and the electronic identification cards, also proclaimed the following: "The inscription in these new identification cards of the number 666, the number of the 'beast' of the Revelation, proves precisely the association of this system of control with the immanent worldwide domination of the antichrist..."

We categorically refuse to receive the new electronic identification cards, whether they contain the number 666 or any other number, which will serve the same unfree plans of the Schengen Agreement.

The use of the number 666 on the new electronic identification cards comprises the last step before the marking on the hand or the forehead. For this reason, their reception by the Christians means the denial of Christ, a naturalization in the rank of Satan and spiritual death...We refuse their reception because these introduce us to an unfree regime, inhuman, dictatorial, anti-democratic and totalitarian. They bind us in an all-strong financial system of authority and control and lead us politically and spiritually imprisoned in the bonds of an electronic dictatorship."



Freedom is a Great Good.

The precious good of freedom" is a God-given gift, and we should never sell it to the devil. Let us not forget that Christ, with His precious blood on the Cross, expiated us, granting us spiritual life and immortality. The Apostle Paul reminds us. **"You were bought for a price. Do not become the slaves of people"** (1 Cor. 7:23).

God does not circumvent our personal freedom and our free will, but He respects it. Today, however, the satanic powers, with guile and deception, are carving out the deprivation of the gift of freedom with the gradual imposing of a worldwide super-government, which is the global dictatorship of the Antichrist, with the seal of the mark and its number, 666. Our Lord and God, Who is blessed unto the ages, said with disappointment towards the disbelieving Jews, **"I came in the name of My Father, and you do not receive Me. If another comes in his own name, him you shall receive"** (John 5:43).

"But watch at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man." (Luke 21:36)

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son and Word of God, through the Theotokos and all the Saints, have mercy on us."

* * *

It is time for us to deal seriously with Christ, to come to know the wealth of our Orthodox faith well, to come to know our own selves, and to localize the various small antichrists that are near us and dwell inside us also... Doesn't the satanic television, which does brainwashing, startle us? Don't the ungodly laws, the debaucheries, the abortion murders, the denuding of men and women, the blasphemies, and so many other wretched things startle us? Don't the anti-Christian parareligions—like Buddhism, Yoga, white and black magic, satanism, New Age, and so many other deceptions which act unhampered—startle us? Don't the various heresies and the schisms startle us? Here, our soul is in danger: We are ignorant of the majesty and the treasure of the faith of our Holy Fathers. We are in ignorance and spiritual numbness. We work in vanity and sinful desires and remain unmoved. When will we wake up from the lethargy of sin, of the 'good life' and the worship of money — we who are governed by our passions and the secular mindset, we who do the works of the devil, we who live like post-Christ idolaters, we who are now in the evil one's net, and will be found, unfortunately, also to be eager followers of the awaited Antichrist?

Let us not forget that God has adopted and sealed us Orthodox through Holy Baptism and Chrism with the Holy Spirit. In his Epistle to the Ephesians 1:13, the Apostle Paul assures us that **"... [all who] have believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit."** That is, since you have believed in preaching the truth of the Gospel, you received the seal of the Holy Spirit by God's promises. The Antichrist will seal his own. Let us stay far from sin and the ungodly works, struggling to become people of God—people of faith and love, humility and patience, prayer and repentance. And the Almighty Lord will preserve us from every deception

and trap of every antichrist because it is written: "**The Lord shall guard all those who love Him**" (Psalm 144:20), and "**to those who love God all works for the good**" (Rom. 8:28).

Beloved, let us place Christ as the beginning and foundation of our every virtue, and let us not fear anything aside from sin because God is with us. Our God-man Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, lives and reigns and protects us, so long as we also love Him as He loves us and move in harmony with Him until our last breath. We are in God's hands while the saints live among us and help us. And let us never forget the words of the Apostle Paul: "**Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and unto the ages**" (Heb. 13:17).

The Lord, the knower of hearts, admires sincere and discretionary reactions against the Antichrist. We are all taking tests for our future enlistment. Let us remain faithful to our Christ with words and works, and may the Divine Grace cover us and strengthen us in those difficult days of the 3 ½ years of world government under the Antichrist.



I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues—last, because with them God's wrath is completed (15:1).

Signs of Christ and signs of the Antichrist

The signs of Christ will be true, while those of the Antichrist will be hallucinations. They will deceive the senses and increase deception and, as a result, perdition. With these signs, he will sway humanity to accept Satan as God's messenger and from imaginary miracles that will deceive those with a carnal mindset.

Let us face the coming of the Antichrist with the following effective spiritual weapons and supplies:

1) With a living faith. Let us unite with Christ in one spirit, and then the signs of the Antichrist will never be able to draw our attention.

We must turn our gaze away from the signs of the Antichrist with scorn and indifference so we are not deceived. Only a living faith shows God to the eyes of the soul.

2) With humble-mindedness. The signs of the Antichrist will remain foreign to the humble person. He will have no relationship with them, nor will he dabble with something outside of God's will or which the Lord's will has condemned. Humility is the imitation of Christ, whereas pride is the imitation of the devil.

3) With prayer. When the great affliction begins, in the age of the Antichrist, true believers will seek help and strength from the Lord, and He will hold them by the hand, strengthening them by empowering them with His divine grace. The divine grace will overshadow the elect of God and will make all the threats of the Antichrist remain ineffective and without result. Then, God will give strength to His servants. They will confess Christ with courage as the Saviour of the world. They will denounce the false messiah Antichrist and will face his martyrdoms with joy and even death itself.

Let us pray to God because He is compassionate to His faithful servants.

4) With spiritual readiness. Our Lord pre-announced the affliction prior to His Second Coming. The commandment He gave His disciples was: "**See, be wakeful, and pray. For you do not know when the time is**" (Mark 13:33). We are constantly in need of attention and prayer, especially in dangers and afflictions, because they draw God's help to us and take us out of impasses.

* * *

The correct knowledge of God and His law, living faith, blessed humble-mindedness, pure prayer, and perfect love [all these] comprise the spiritual logic. In contrast, ignorance of God, disbelief, pride, self-confidence, and self-love comprise the carnal mindset. The carnal train of thought does not know God or understand how God wishes to lead man to the knowledge of God.

Despite all the trials of the last days, humanity will walk toward destruction, and people will live an utterly carnal life and will strive, unfortunately, only for their sinful desires—like in the days of Noah.

The righteous will struggle against sin and injustice, and the impious and unrighteous - with haughtiness - will be lewd and unjust ~ scorning the virtuous and pious people of God.

We ought to always be ready even to die for our holy faith and to become confessor martyrs of Orthodoxy.

In Revelations 2:10, we read: **"Do not fear what you are about to suffer... Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life."**

We were born Orthodox Christians, and we should remain Orthodox Christians, but we should also die as such. The martyrs of the faith, both ancient and recent, show the path of firm confession. Saint Ignatios the God-bearer used to say, **"It is better for me to die in Christ Jesus than to reign over the ends of the earth..."**

The new martyr Aggelis proclaimed to the Hagarenes, **"...Even if you would give me your Kingdom itself, you would not be able to sway my heart from my faith and my most sweet Jesus."**

We are called to participate in Christ's sufferings and, if granted, to become partakers of His heavenly glory. In Orthodoxy, a harsh struggle occurs between the confessors of the faith and the united powers of disbelief.

We are called, beloved, in the general flood of spiritual wretchedness to remain in virtue throughout our life elect of God; to face persecutions and afflictions with patience; to avoid deception of various false prophets and of the Antichrist; to be vigilant in good deeds and the ceaseless preservation of virtues; to live daily the awaiting of the coming of Christ. The Lord in Revelations 16:15 foretells us: **"Behold I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who is vigilant and keeps his garments."** The Lord urges us to practice spiritual watchfulness and blesses him, who is vigilant and keeps his virtues pure.

Saint Gregory the Theologian urges us: **"While we have time, let us visit Christ, let us serve Christ, let us nourish thirst, let us clothe Christ, let us offer hospitality to Christ, let us honour Christ."**

Let us struggle, beloved, to live with the fear of God and always keep His commandments — to become strong and glorious and to remain unshaken with our faith in Christ.

Christ will help His faithful servants and strengthen all who confess before people and before the Antichrist of the last days. The faithful who will confess or become martyr for Christ will be granted the greatest honour of having the Lord confess them on the last day of Judgment before His Heavenly Father.

The faithful are given the opportunity to struggle and to receive the crown of life: **"To him who is victorious, I will give him to sit with me on the throne of my Father."**

The coming of the Antichrist will distinguish the genuine faith from the unbelievers.

Let us love the Lord with our whole soul so He will become our defender and surround us with His mercy.

Let us remain firm in our Orthodox faith, living and acting with Orthodox fervour, and we will be blessed because no one who trusts in the Lord has ever been put to shame.

And let us not forget that our Lord Jesus Christ is almighty and will not abandon His Church and His believers but will defend them, protect them, and crush their enemies as clay pots. The Lord assured us. "**I will edify my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against her**" (Math. 16:18), and elsewhere "**I am the Alpha and the Omega the first and the last, the beginning and the end**" (Rev. 22:13). And the Theologian continues, "**Blessed are those who fulfill his commandments, that they may have the right to the Tree of Life, and that they may enter the city by the gates. Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and fornicators and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.**" (22:14-15).



And there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. And on his head are many crowns. And his name is the Word of God (19:11,13).

"I shall love You, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my foundation and my refuge and my deliverer" (Psalm 17:1).

The Lord works everything for our advantage, and we - with faith and patience - undergo the days of our trials and afflictions, having our hope in God, undergoing our misfortunes with heartfelt prayer and thankful bravery until the divine grace and His philanthropy help us, delivers and saves us. The prophet David tells us: **"He shall cry out to Me and I Shall hear him, I am with him in affliction, I shall deliver him..."** (Psalm 90:15). And elsewhere again. **"I was younger and became old and did not see a righteous one abandoned and his seed seeking bread."**

Unfortunately, our chronic negligence made our hearts hardened, our spiritual sight blinded, and our soul's senses lose their spiritual functioning. An honour-loving attempt, genuine interest, return to God, repentance, confession, regular church attendance, and Divine Communion are necessary to return to their normal functioning. With a new spiritual life, with true humility, faith and love for God and His image (i.e., man), together with the help of our Savior Jesus Christ and the intercessions of the Most Holy Theotokos and all the Holy Fathers of our Orthodox Church, we will obtain the Kingdom of the heavens.

Whoever loves goodness and truth and has good spiritual hearing hears the saving voice of Christ, which assures us: **"Whoever is of the truth hears My voice"** (John 18:37).

The Apostle James gives us the following spiritual recipe, with bright and eternal results: **"Submit ye therefore to God, resist the devil, and he shall flee from you. Approach God, and He will approach you..."** (James 4:7). We must be obedient to God's will, with the keeping of His commandments, to obtain our purification from the passions and our spiritual progress.

St. John Chrysostom teaches us, saying. **"And even if the enemies are innumerable, our own defender is stronger...An angelic army defends the pious, a group of prophets, the power of the Apostles, the intercessions of the Martyrs."**

Saint Chrysostom tells us that one thing is grievous: sin alone. All other things are dust and smoke; if we love God, we can suffer all the unpleasant stuff with pleasure... Good disposition and hope for eternal rewards make afflictions light.

Beloved, we are in God's hands, and nothing happens without His will. Let us entrust to God our every hope, and He will provide for us. In Psalm 54:23, we read: **"Cast upon the Lord your care, and He will nourish you."** While it is written in Psalm 117:11, **"Circling they encircled me and by the name of the Lord I staved them off."**

Saint Theodosios the Great, to brothers of the Monastery who were distressed for their indigence, used to say: **"Did, perhaps, did He who nourished with manna the whole people in the wilderness – and fed such a multitude with five loaves of bread – become weaker in power or unnerved in granting today also?"**

Beloved, when we possess God by keeping the commandments and obtaining virtues, then we have all of His things.



And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years (20:1-2).

In the Gospel, according to Matthew, the Lord urges us to "**Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you**" (5:33). One person has to be our refuge: God. Truly, he who hopes in the God-man Christ will never fail. Sure hope is a gift of God, which sprouts on the ground of living faith and beautifies our lives.

In the Acts of the Apostles, it is written: "**There is salvation in nothing else. Nor is there another name under heaven given to men, in which we should be saved**" (4:12).

So much is the power of Christ that in His name alone, angels, people, and demons will kneel and confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord and the only Deliverer of our souls and bodies.

The most shaking news of all ages is that God manifested on the earth as man, taught the truth, performed miracles, was crucified, resurrected, ascended, and will again come with glory. All the other things are small news. For this reason, the best preparation for the coming years is for us to become better Christians ~ and struggle to keep the door of our hearts open to the mercy, enlightenment, and grace of our Lord and God Jesus Christ.

Our main work here on earth is our salvation. All other things are secondary. Unfortunately, we are moving spiritually with great difficulty and eager for secular things. It is time for us to seriously decide to readjust our course with the sacred Gospel as the compass. We are called to obtain a genuine ecclesiastical mindset and to be conscientious members of the Church of Christ. Our life must be crucified to the world, and we should not forget that two things in our life are unbreakably associated: Affliction and Grace. "**Through the grace of our Lord Jesus, we believe we will be saved.**" But Grace presupposes the Cross: "**Through many afflictions, we must enter into the kingdom of God.**" And "**he who forbears unto the end will be saved.**" If our life here is seven days, we must, with patience, reach up to the last minute of the last day ~ implementing the Lord's will, day and night. Thus, we will obtain heaven!

* * *

Basil the Great relates the following didactic thing about God's all-wise and philanthropic providence: "**I heard from a particular sea person that the urchin, that tiny and easily scornable animal, forewarns the sailors about good weather or stormy weather. When it pre-senses a storm, the urchin secures itself beneath a large rock and, weighting it as an anchor, is not swayed by the waves... Who taught the urchin this tactic? There is nothing which God neglects or for which He does not provide. He watches everything, offering to each one its salvation.**

"If God did not leave the urchin outside His loving care and attendance, what would you say about your own life? Won't He embrace it with the same loving care?"

* * *



And I, John, saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband (21:2).

The consoling message of St. Simon of the Holy Mountain

... These fervent problems forced me, after the Vespers at the Main Church of the Sacred Monastery of Simonos Petras, to go to the cave of St. Simon to pray and for him to take me out of the impasse. I did the prayer rope saying: **"Tell us, Saint Simon, what will happen to us with the Antichrist, the identification cards, the marking, etc.?"**

At night, when I was sleeping, I heard a loud voice: **"Tell the Christians not to fear the Antichrist because the Lord will not allow him to thresh His flocks. The Lord will be with you also, and you will see Him with your natural eyes."**...

I thanked Saint Simon, the miracle worker who very quickly solved my problem, and my joy was indescribable. Subsequently, I chanted, **"I glorify You, O Lord,"** which I always do, much more so when my humble prayer is fruitful.



Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven. He was robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs were like fiery pillars. (10:1)

**I heard with my ears chanting
of the then Holy Fathers of the Sacred Monastery
and the sound writing of the Holy Spirit.**

Once, I visited a small and simple little Monastery with a few souls. Once, when we venerated with awe the Saint of the Monastery and smelled the ineffable fragrance, the true God in Trinity - Who searches out kidneys and hearts - enlightened me, and I was telling them: **"Don't fear, my sisters, here in the wilderness where you are alone. You have day and night the protection of the ancient Holy Fathers who lived at the little Monastery and became victims of the Turkish beastliness."** I kept telling them this many times so that the humble Abbess later revealed to me, in the hospitable guesthouse of the sacred Monastery, a mystery of the present age.

"You were right, Father," the Abbess said, "you were telling us that we are not alone," and she continued: "The holy Monastery had, when it was flourishing, many holy fathers. It was a men's monastery. However, an attack occurred from the then-bloodthirsty Turks, and they butchered around five hundred holy fathers. One year, some visitors gave us a cassette recorder. A nun asked permission to record the Orthros service in the church because we did not have a clergyman, and the blessing was given to her. It was the 2nd Sunday of the Fast, at which time our Church honours Saint Gregory Palamas. The nun joyfully took the cassette recorder into the church and taped the sacred service of the Orthros. Afterwards, we went to the guesthouse to take our breakfast. We turned on the cassette recorder to hear how it taped the service. The cassette recorder began playing what was chanted by the sister nuns. When, however, it reached the odes, and while the nuns were chanting, a certain choir of the Holy Fathers could be heard chanting hymns from the pamphlet of the service for Gregory Palamas. They sang, "Saint of God intercede for us," so loud that the recorder began to shake. They also chanted four troparions from the 1st ode. What voice was that?! What lads were they who passed by there?!"...

"When I heard it, I cried very much, asking my Lord and God to reveal in what chronology these lads lived and what venerable martyrdom they underwent. But it was not yet revealed to me..."

This historical event is a mystery because no other voice was heard during the taping except their own. How did the tape record a sound that was not heard?

(An Orthodox Clergyman)

* * *



And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. And there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake (8:2-5).

And a Few Didactic Examples



In the life of Saint Mark the Athenian, it is mentioned that when, according to God's commandment, Abba Serapion visited St. Mark, he asked him:

"Now tell me, Abba, does the world still exist?"

"It exists with your prayers, holy Elder."

"Is there still faith in the world?"

"There is, by your holy prayers, holy Elder."

"Is there faith in that which the Gospel talks about, to tell this mountain to leave and for it to go to the sea?" However, as he was saying these words, he pointed to the mountain across, which began moving towards the sea. And then St. Mark told the moving mountain: **"Hey! Be still. We are just discussing. I didn't command you to leave."**

"Is there such faith?"

* * *

We know the symbol of our faith (i.e. the Creed) by heart. We have icons of saints. Yet in every difficulty, we lose sight of this and run here and there — even to the doors of satan: the psychics, the mediums. We believe with words, but with works, we are unbelieving. We name God, Father, and daily are fainthearted, and this happens to us because of weak faith.

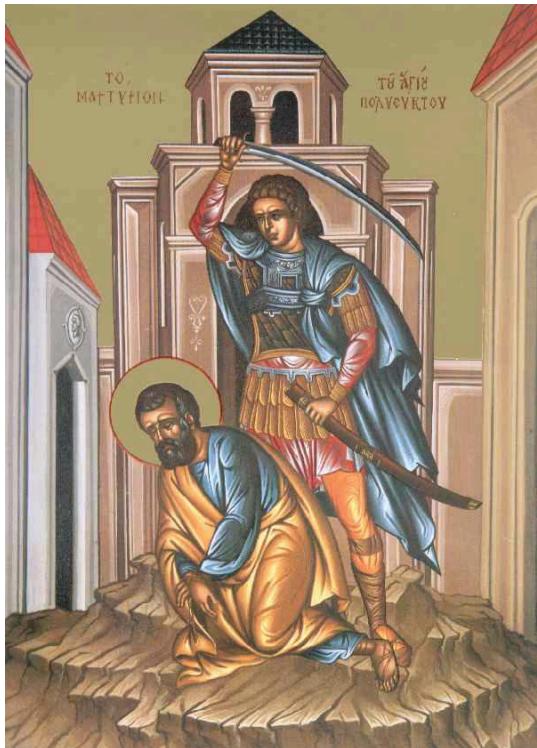
What is Christ, some incapable poor thing? Absolute faith and trust in Christ are necessary, and then we will live under God's protective umbrella—a permanent miracle. Because of our egotism, lewdness, money-loving, the world, fashion, and lack of repentance, we chase away God's grace. We suffer hardships and are deprived of God's rich gifts.

If we want God to listen to us in just and advantageous petitions for our souls, we ought to listen to Him in keeping His commandments. When, in other words, we are working for God's holy will with grateful love of honour and a good disposition, then He is obligated to provide the necessities to His humble, faithful servants who love Him.

* * *

The First Love to Christ

"He who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of me" (Math. 10:37)



On January 9th, St. Polyeuktos is celebrated.

Listen to the last part of his life:

He was to become a martyr under Decius in 250 A.D. And the idolater Tyrant tells him:

"Either you deny Christ and sacrifice to the idols, or you will be butchered like an ox!"

And immediately at that moment, his wife falls at the Saint's feet and tells him:

"Oh, don't leave me alone, abandoned, unprotected, poor and a widow!"

And his little child was kissing him, and tears ran down his cheeks...

And Saint Polyeuktos then told them:

"God alone, Who reads my heart, knows how much I love both of you, but the first love belongs to Christ! I won't sacrifice to the idols. I am a Christian!"

And right away, the idolaters beheaded him.

But, my Christian, "the first love to Christ," must have taken root and found an echo in our own hearts as well. It is our own duty. Do you, instead of Christ, love pleasures and enjoyment more? Maybe you struggle to obtain superfluous wealth? **"Christ and our soul we need,"** Saint Kosmas Aitolos used to say.

May, beloved, the All-holy Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, through the intercessions of the Most Holy Theotokos and of all the Saints, enlighten us, strengthen us, make us firm in the Orthodox confession, have mercy and save us freely. Amen.

* * *

STRENGTHENING PASSAGES FROM THE HOLY SCRIPTURE

"In the world you have tribulation, but be of good courage; I have overcome the world" (John 6:33).

"There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, ... but glory and honour and peace for everyone who does good" (Rom. 2:9-10).

"I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us." (Rom. 8:18).

"By your endurance, you will gain your lives." (Luke 21:19).

"Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, will He find faith on earth?" (Lukel8:8).

"... This Jesus, Who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11).

"The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His servants what must soon take place; ... Blessed is he who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written therein; for the time is near." (Rev. 1:1 and 3).

* * *

"If someone is teaching you outside of the things which the holy catholic Church received from the Holy Apostles, Fathers and Synods and preserved up till now, do not listen to him... close your ears." (St. John Damascene).

"The Church of Christ is not comprised of the many, but of those who keep the correct and saving confession of faith, even if they are few" (St. Theodore Studite).

* * *

Whoever has benefitted from this volume, take an interest
in the enlightenment of other friends of yours with a good disposition.

Our indifference to others will be considered a sin.

